

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1683

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AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION USUN

USMISSION USNATO

DIA WASHDC

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

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AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 NICOSIA 1642

PASS AID/W FOR NESA/NENA

ROME FOR FAO

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINT EGEN CY TU

SUBJECT: TURKISH CYPRIOT ECONOMY

1. SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION: THE FOLLOWING REPRESENTS THE BEST INFORMATION CURRENTLY AVAILABLE TO EMBASSY ON THE ECONOMY OF TURKISH OCCUPIED CYPRUS. EMBASSY MUST CAUTION, HOWEVER, THAT ACCURATE STATISTICS DO NOT EXIST AND ALL FIGURES QUOTED SHOULD BE REGARDED AS ESTIMATES. LOCAL TURKISH AND TURK CYPRIOT OFFICIALS DO NOT HAVE RELIABLE DATA BASE FROM WHICH TO WORK AND MUCH OF INFORMATION NORMALLY
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AVAILABLE REGARDING AN ECONOMY IS CONSIDERED "CONFIDENTIAL."

EMBASSY'S OVERALL IMPRESSION IS THAT TURKS HAVE MADE SOME PROGRESS TOWARDS REACTIVATING ECONOMY OF NORTHERN CYPRUS, BUT RESULTS HAVE BEEN SPOTTY AND TURK CYPRIOTS WILL DEPEND UPON GOT FOR FINANCIAL AND PERSONNEL SUPPORT DURING FORE-SEEABLE FUTURE. TO FULLY REACTIVATE ECONOMY, LARGE-SCALE IMMIGRATION FROM MAINLAND OR RETURN OF LARGE NUMBER OF GREEK REFUGEES WILL BE REQUIRED. END SUMMARY.

2. AGRICULTURE:

A. THIS YEAR, TURK CYPRIOTS CULTIVATED ONLY 320,000 OUT OF 1 - 1.5 MILLION DONUMS NORMALLY PLANTED IN NORTHERN CYPRUS. (THREE DONUMS EQUALS ONE ACRE.) THEY ANTICIPATE HARVESTING 21,300 TONS OF WHEAT, 30,000 TONS OF BARLEY. THIS ESTIMATE BASED ON SURVEY OF CEREALS CURRENTLY STANDING IN TURK CYPRIOT FIELDS. RELATIVELY LOW YIELD BLAMED ON "LACK OF PRECIPITATION" (DESPITE THIS WINTER'S ABUNDANT RAINFALL). GIVEN TURK CYPRIOTS INABILITY THUS FAR TO CREATE EFFICIENT AGRICULTURAL BUREAUCRACY TO HANDLE HARVESTING, PROCESSING OF CROPS, EVEN THIS ESTIMATE MAY BE HIGH. IF YIELD REACHES EXPECTED LEVEL, TURK CYPRIOT AGRICULTURAL OFFICIALS ESTIMATE THAT THEY WILL NEED TO IMPORT MINIMUM OF 8,700 TONS WHEAT; 4,700 TONS BARLEY. THEY HAVE NOT YET EXPLORED OVERSEAS MARKETS AND ANTICIPATE RECEIVING REQUIRED CEREALS FROM TURKEY, PRESUMABLY WITHOUT PAYMENT.

B. CITRUS. TURK CYPRIOT OFFICIALS TELL US THEY EXPECT BKEXPORT 80,000 TONS OF CITRUS THIS SEASON. FROM THEIR OWN ESTIMATES OF MONETARY VALUE THIS CROP, HOWEVER, ANTICIPATED EXPORT FIGURE APPEARS TO BE NEARER 60,000 TONS. LACK OF IRRIGATION DURING CRITICAL SUMMER MONTHS LAST YEAR DAMAGED MUCH OF CROP AND WE UNDERSTAND CITRUS FROM NORTHERN CYPRUS IS SELLING WELL BELOW USUAL MARKET AVERAGE. DESPITE GREEK CYPRIOT REPRESENTATIONS, TURK CYPRIOTS DO NOT APPEAR TO BE ENCOUNTERING SIGNIFICANT DIFFICULTY IN SELLING CITRUS ABROAD. MAJOR DIFFICULTY HAS BEEN IN MOBILIZING PEOPLE TO PICK CROP, LACK OF ADEQUATE TRANSPORTATION AND SHORTAGE OF PACKING MATERIAL FOR EXPORT MARKET. SOME FOREIGN FLAG SHIPS ARE CALLING AT FAMAGUSTA PORT TO COLLECT CITRUS FOR DIRECT SHIPMENT TO EUROPEAN
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MARKETS. ADDITIONALLY, TURKISH FLAG VESSELS HAVE BEEN CARRYING CITRUS TO LIBYA. TOTAL AMOUNT SHIPPED THUS FAR UNKNOWN.

C. VERY FEW VEGETABLES WERE GROWN IN NORTHERN CYPRUS THIS YEAR AND MOST OF POPULATION'S REQUIREMENTS ARE BEING IMPORTED FROM TURKEY. LOCAL PRESS HAS ESTIMATED VALUE OF THIS IMPORT IN EXCESS OF ONE MILLION DOLLARS. NORTHERN CYPRUS

NORMALLY GROWS VERY LITTLE OF THESE CROPS AND MUCH OF WHAT WAS PLANTED WAS RUINED BY LACK OF IRRIGATION.

D. TURK CYPRIOT AGRICULTURAL OFFICIALS EXPECT AREA TO BE SELF-SUFFICIENT IN MEAT, POULTRY AND MILK PRODUCTS. IN LATTER TWO, THEY REPORT SURPLUS CAPACITY AND HOPE TO BEGIN EXPORTS TO MAINLAND TURKEY IN NEAR FUTURE.

3. TOURISM:

A. TURK CYPRIOTS PLAN OPEN 13 HOTELS, WITH 2,500 BEDS, BY SUMMER 1975. TWO SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED TO GIVE SHORT-TERM COURSES TO PROSPECTIVE TURKISH CYPRIOT HOTEL WORKERS. TO DATE, SOME 400 PEOPLE ARE EMPLOYED DIRECTLY BY HOTEL INDUSTRY, WITH ADDITIONAL 700 INDIVIDUALS WORKING IN RESTAURANTS AND CAFES. THUS FAR, ALL FACILITIES GROSSLY UNDERUTILIZED AND HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS ARE OPERATING AT A LOSS. TURK CYPRIOT OFFICIALS (PARTICULARLY MINISTER OF TOURISM CAGLAR YASAL) RECOGNIZE THAT IT WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE IMPROVE SITUATION UNLESS MARTIAL CLIMATE OF NORTHERN CYPRUS RELAXED. EVEN THEN THEY REALIZE THEY ARE UNLIKELY TO ATTRACT OTHER THAN MAINLAND TURKISH TOURISTS THIS YEAR. YASAL DOES NOT EXPECT TO EXCEED 30 PERCENT OCCUPANCY DURING 1975 SEASON, DESPITE EXTREMELY LOW PRICES BEING OFFERED. (FULL PENSION AT LUXURY SALAMIS BAY HOTEL ONLY US 15 DOLLARS PER NIGHT.)

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FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1684

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
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B. ACCORDING YASAL THERE ARE NO CURRENT PLANS REOPEN FAMAGUSTA NEW CITY (VAROSHA). TO DO SO WOULD REQUIRE IN EXCESS OF ONE BILLION TURKISH LIRA (\$73,800,000) AND MANPOWER IS SIMPLY NOT THERE. TURK CYPRIOT OFFICIALS DO NOT DISCOUNT POSSIBILITY OF OPENING SOME OF VAROSHA'S HOTELS BY SUMMER 1976 IF THERE NO POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. THEY CLAIM TO HAVE RECEIVED OVER 4,000 APPLICATIONS FROM MAINLAND TURKS SEEKING EMPLOYMENT HERE. NOW THAT INCOME EARNED IN CYPRUS CAN BE CREDITED TOWARDS RETIREMENT ON MAINLAND, THEY SEE NO IMPEDIMENT TO EMPLOYING TURKISH LABOR.

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C. REGARDLESS OF FATE VAROSHA HOTELS, TURK CYPRIOT TOURISM OFFICIALS DOUBT WHETHER INDUSTRY CAN BE SUBSTANTIALY REVITALIZED UNTIL NICOSIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT RE-OPENED. THEY DISCOUNT POSSIBILITY THAT EITHER ERCAN (FORMERLY TYMBOU) OR PINARBASI (FORMERLY KRINI) CAN BE DEVELOPED FOR TOURISTIC USE, DESPITE FACT THEY HAVE BUDGETED \$100,000 FOR CURRENT IMPROVEMENTS AT FORMER FACILITY. THESE OFFICIALS ARE PRESSING DENKTASH AND GOT TO MOVE AHEAD ON AIRPORT NEGOTIATIONS. TURKISH AIRLINES (THY), OPERATING HERE UNDER GUISE OF TURK CYPRIOT AIRLINES, CURRENTLY MAKES NINE FLIGHTS PER WEEK BETWEEN ERCAN, ADANA, AND ANKARA. THERE IS SOME CHANCE OF INCREASE DURING SUMMER SEASON.

D. IN ADDITION TO MERSIN-FAMAGUSTA CAR FERRY WHICH HAS BEEN OPERATING SINCE CEASEFIRE, TURK CYPRIOTS HAVE NOT INAUGURATED THRICE WEEKLY SERVICE BETWEEN TASUCU (SOUTHERN TURKEY) AND KYRENIA BY SMALLER FERRY. THEY EXPECT BEGIN BYDROFOIL SERVICE BETWEEN ANTAYLA, ALANYA, AND KYRENIA LATER THIS SUMMER. WHILE ALL OF THESE SERVICES WCVL BE RUN NOMINALLY BY TURK CYPRIOTS, CONTROLLING INTEREST IS

OWNED BY GOT OR MAINLAND COMPANIES.

4. INDUSTRY:

A. TURK CYPRIOTS CLAIM TO HAVE REOPENED 34 FACTORIES, NOMINALLY CAPITALIZING AT 100 MILLION LIRA (\$7,380,000) OPERATING UNDER CONTROL TURKISH CYPRIOT INDUSTRIAL HOLDING COMPANY. IN FACT, HOLDING COMPANY HAS GIVEN MANAGEMENT OF PLANTS TO VARIOUS INDIVIDUAL FIRMS, ALMOST ALL FROM MAINLAND TURKEY. VERY LITTLE ACTUAL CAPITAL HAS BEEN EXPENDED. OF 34 PLANTS LISTED, ONLY 14 ARE PRODUCING AT THIS TIME, PRIMARILY CITRUS PROCESSING, PLASTICS, WOODWORKING, AND FURNITURE. TO DATE, ONLY 600 TURK AND TURK CYPRIOT WORKERS ARE EMPLOYED IN THESE INDUSTRIES WHICH, WHEN FULLY OPERATIONAL, COULD HIRE CLOSE TO 6,000 WORKERS.

B. TURKISH EMBASSY OFFICIALS PRIVATELY QUESTION WHETHER FACTORIES CAN BE MADE PROFITABLE. THEY POINT OUT THAT MARKET IN NORTHEGJ CYPRUS IS EXTREMELY LIMITED AND WILL BE SATURATED ONCE PLANTS BEGIN WORKING AT CAPACITY.
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MOST OF PRODUCTS REPORTEDLY COMPETE WITH THOSE ALREADY MANUFACTURED ON MAINLAND. KEY DETERMINANT OF PROFITABILITY WILL BE TURK CYPRIOTS' ABILITY DEVELOP EXPORT MARKET.

5. BANKING AND TRADE:

A. BANK DEPOSITS IN NORTHERN CYPRUS ARE UP 20 TO 25 PERCENT COMPARED TO LAST YEAR. LARGELY THIS IS RESULT OF SOUTHERN TURKS SELLING POSSESSIONS BEFORE MOVING NORTH AND THEN DEPOSITING PROCEEDS IN LOCAL BANKS ON ARRIVAL. BANK OFFICIALS REPORT CURRENCY FLOW UP BETWEEN 200 AND 300 PERCENT BUT VIRTUALLY NO LOANS HAVE BEEN MADE SINCE SUMMER 1974. THEY ARE UNAWARE OF ANY SIGNIFICANT PRIVATE INVESTMENTS PENDING IN NEAR FUTURE.

B. BANKERS TELL US THAT TURKISH LIRA IS GRADUALLY REPLACING CYPRUS POUND IN NORTHERN CYPRUS AS COMMERCE ACROSS CEASEFIRE LINE INCREASES. REPORTEDLY, TURK CYPRIOTS ARE BEING PERMITTED TO BUY WIDE VARIETY OF PRODUCTS FROM GREEK; SELLING PORK, POULTRY, AND MILK PRODUCTS IN RETURN. (MOBIL REP TELLS US HE SELLING 1000 CYPRUS POUNDS (\$2,831) PER DAY OF LPG TO NORTHERN CYPRUS.)

C. MOST FOREIGN COMMERCE THUS FAR IS COMPOSED OF IMPORTS. ALTHOUGH NO ACCURATE FIGURES ARE AVAILABLE, OFFICIALS ESTIMATE THAT 70 PERCENT OF IMPORTS ARE COMING FROM MAINLAND TURKEY, ALMOST ALL VIA COMMUNALLY OWNED ETI CORPORATION. ETI ESTIMATES IT HAS IMPORTED 8-10 MILLION CYPRUS POUNDS (US\$23-

28 MILLION) WORTH OF GOODS. IN EFFORTS EXPAND PURCHASES BEYOND TURKEY, PARTICULARLY TO PROCURE BADLY NEEDED SPARE PARTS, ETI HAS PURCHASED THREE MEDIUM TRUCKS AND HAS TWO 33-HON VEHICLES ON ORDER. TRUCKS HAVE BEEN PERMITTED TRANSIT EUROPE, WITH SOME DIFFICULTY, ON TIR WHILE FOREIGN SHIPPERS ARE NOW ACCEPTING CARGO DESTINED FOR NORTHERN CYPRUS ON BILLS OF LADING, SO LONG AS INTERMEDICARY STOP IN TURKISH MAINLAND PORT INDICATED.

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D. CENTRALIZED CONTROL OF IMPORTS HAS LED TO CHARGES OF CORRUPTION BY TFSC OFFICIALS. ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES ARE FREQUENTLY AVAILABLE ONLY ON BLACK MARKET AT HIGHLY INFLATED PRICES. "FAVORED" DEALERS APPEAR TO BE FIRST IN LINE FOR SPARE PARTS.

E. PRIVATE MERCHANTS HAVE IMPORTED LITTLE SINCE JULY, LARGELY DRAWING DOWN EXISTING STOCKS. RELUCTANCE BASED ON INSECURITY, LACK OF MARKET, ABSENCE OF CENTRAL BANK TO PROVIDE FOREIGN EXCHANGE FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE. MAINLAND ZIRAAT (AGRICULTURAL) BANK, WHICH SUPPOSED TO FILL THIS ROLE, UNABLE TO DO SO SINCE TURK CYPRIOTS HAVE BEEN GRANTED NO FOREIGN EXCHANGE
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BALANCE. ALL TRANSACTIONS REPORTEDLY REFERRED TO MAINLAND FOR FOREIGN EXCHANGE APPROVAL. PRIVATE TURK BANK, WITH LONDON BRANCH, HAS BEEN ABLE CIRCUMVENT CONTROLS TO SOME EXTENT.

6. EMPLOYMENT.

A. OFFICIALS ESTIMATE THAT 65 PERCENT OF THE TURKISH WORK FORCE IS EMPLOYED IN AGRICULTURE. VIRTUALLY ALL SOUTHERN FARMERS WHO MOVED NORTH HAVE BEEN RESETTLED ON LAND WITH TWO-YEAR RENT FREE LEASES. FEW HAVE ANY CURRENT INCOME; ALMOST ALL REQUIRE ASSISTANCE IN MONEY AND KIND. OFFICIALS ESTIMATE THAT 30,000 TURKISH CYPRIOTS WILL CONTINUE TO REQUIRE AID THROUGHOUT 1975 (ALTHOUGH ONLY 3,570 FAMILIES ACTUALLY APPEAR ON CASH WELFARE ROLLS).

B. 2,474 TURKISH CYPRIOTS, INCLUDING OVER 600 UNIVERSITY GRADUATES, ARE CURRENTLY REGISTERED AS UNEMPLOYED. THE LABOR OFFICE, SINCE THE WAR, HAS SUCCEEDED IN PLACING ONLY 450 WORKERS. MANY OF THE UNEMPLOYED, ESPECIALLY THE UNIVERSITY GRADUATES, ARE UNQUALIFIED FOR INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT AND, DESPITE ADMINISTRATION EFFORTS, UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS MAY RISE AS MORE FIGHTERS ARE RELEASED FROM MILITARY FORCES. TO FILL THE VACANCIES IN INDUSTRIAL SECTOR, TFSC WILL HAVE EITHER TO RETRAIN THE UNEMPLOYED OR IMPORT WORKERS FROM TURKEY. IMPORTATION IS ALREADY WELL UNDERWAY. UOMMON ESTIMATE AMONG OUR CONTACTS IS THAT CLOSE TO 10,000 MAINLAND TURKS ARE NOW WORKING IN CYPRUS. SEVERAL WELL PLACED INDIVIDUALS TELL US THAT NUMBER EVENTUALLY COULD REACH 100,000 (INCLUDING DEPENDENTS) IN ABSENCE OVERALL SETTLEMENT.

7. BUDGET: IT IS DIFFICULT TO PIN DOWN PRECISE BUDGET ESTIMATES FOR COMING YEAR. TURK CYPRIOTS HAVE STATED THAT THIS WILL BE APPROXIMATELY ONE BILLION TURKISH LIRA (\$73,800,000). ACCORDING TURK EMBASSY, HOWEVER, ONLY INCOME WHICH TURK CYPRIOTS CAN COUNT ON IS GOT SUBVENTION (APPROXIMATELY HALF OF ESTIMATED EXPENDITURES). THIS AID FIGURE HAS REMAINED CONSTANT DURING PAST FEW YEARS. GIVEN DEPRESSED STATE OF NORTHERN

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ECONOMY, IT IS DOUBTFUL WHETHER TURK CYPRIOTS WILL BE ABLE TO RAISE VERY MUCH THROUGH INDIRECT TAXATION, WHICH NORMALLY ACCOUNTED FOR 70 PERCENT OF GOC REVENUE. ALSO QUESTIONABLE WHETHER TURK CYPRIOTS WILL BE ABLE TO RAISE SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF MONEY THROUGH BOND SALES. EFFORTS TO DO SO BEFORE THE WAR WERE NOTABLY UNSUCCESSFUL. TFSC PLANS TO EXPAND DIRECT TAXATION BUT TURK CYPRIOTS ARE PAST MASTERS AT AVOIDING THIS.

8. CONCLUSION: ECONOMY IN NORTHERN CYPRUS HAS IMPROVED FROM LOW POINT OF SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1974, BUT IS STILL FAR BELOW PRE-WAR LEVAL. LARGE AMOUNT OF LAND REMAINS UNCULTIVATED AND THIS YEAR'S CROP WILL NOT BE SUFFICIENT TO FEED EVEN REDUCED POPULATION REMAINING NORTH OF CEASEFIRE LINE. SINCE MOST OF INDUSTRY INCLUDING TOURISM REMAINS DORMANT AND SINCE THERE IS NOT SUFFICIENT SKILLED LABOR AVAILABLE TO REACTIVATE WITHOUT LARGE-SCALE IMPORTATION OF MANPOWER FROM TURKEY (OR RETURN GREEK REFUGEES), IT IS QUESTIONABLE HOW MUCH PROGRESS CAN BE MADE IN SHORT TERM. ALSO, TURK CYPRIOTS' LACK OF MANAGERIAL CAPABILITY BODES ILL FOR FUTURE. IF CURRENT TRENDS TLD, COMMUNITY WILL BECOME INCREASINGLY DOMINATED BY MAINLAND BUREAUCRATS AND PRIVATE BUSINESSMEN WITH SEEMINGLY INEVITABLE FALL IN STANDARD OF LIVING. END CONCLUSION.
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